787 These visions are attributed to the thunder which sends them to men under its semi-personal form amõ.

771 Thus the Nambikwara conceive of three types of supernatural
756 forces: first the power which is abstract, but placed in objects or substances, the nãnde; next the spirits acting in the form of supernatural or seminatural animals, atãsu or jaguar. Finally the thunder, with which under certain conditions, it is possible to entertain personal relations. Each individual can, in a certain measure, establish contact with these forces, however it is the shamans who have the specialized function of intermediary between the human group and the supernatural world. The information which we shall give on this point will be very summary, for it was impossible to obtain from our informants a coherent treatment of the question of shamanism. None of the groups encountered had a shaman with the exception of a single one (group c) where the powers of the chief and the sorcerer were found [102] concentrated in a single individual (C20). Our best informant, B1, chief of the allied group, was categorical concerning the fact that C20 combined the two qualities of uelikabala (chief, c) and of ndãre (thunder, c) although he was only uilikãde, temporal chief. The sorcerer would then be simultaneously the man who identifies himself with thunder, and who communicates with it in the personal form called amõ. Likewise, in the eastern groups (a1 restricted and enlarged, and a2), it was not possible to uncover the presence of a sorcerer or of an individual with such powers. This fact could be interpreted in three different ways: that the sorcerers were held apart; or that they dissimulated their nature; that the institution of the sorcerer is, in fact, absent in certain groups; or that, in these same groups, the functions of the sorcerer are exercised by the chief, and that, in inverse fashion to what is produced in group c, it is the spiritual functions which are in second place with regard to the temporal. It is this hypothesis which we consider the most reasonable. In group a1; A1 makes the arrow poison and treats sick persons by suction, functions which in group c come within the province of C20 considered as shaman, rather than chief of the group.

756 Whatever the fact may be, and as we have just said, it is the sorcerer who makes the poisons, and it is he who proceeds to the magical treatment of the sick, clearly different from the positive
275 therapeutics likewise practiced. The Nambikwara are familiar with
● 757 quite a large number of medicinal plants and treat certain illnesses with their help. Thus they care for purulent ophthalmia by an

injection of pao preto (ikãtu nẽʔẽrãm, a1), put in the eye with the aid of a funnel of leaves from whose lower extremity the liquid falls drop by drop. But other maladies, considered the result of poisoning (or of a charm; in both cases: nãnde) are exclusively within the domain of the sorcerer. He makes the "arrows of thunder" (ndaõrede, b1) in all points similar to those used for hunting except that their dimensions are much more restricted. The treatment consists of three operations: throwing the arrows around the sick person to carry away the spirits; sucking the body to force out the cause of the illness; this cause is thrown far away when it has been captured:

43. ãdige underãdige kadirẽnka ũngeraige tenũndige (b1)
throw, throw far away the little thorns sucked with the mouth, throw away [the evil]. (1)

1. The informant made it known that by "little thorns" he meant to designate the "arrows of thunder" which are only several centimeters in length. One notes the same assimilation in other regions of South America. Thus, the informant of Karsten in the Chaco (R. Karsten, "Indian tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco," Societas Scientiarum Fennicae, Commentationes Humanorum Litterarum, IV, 1, p. 132-133) cites as the cause of the malady and the way of combatting it, an "arrow" or "splinter").

[103] Afterwards the sick person is usually cured and can take up his work again:

44. enẽndige deẽndige enẽna dẽdnige (b1)
To be sick is finished [one can] continue.

However, the sorcerer can establish much closer relationships with the supernatural powers. During our stay in his group, C20 disappeared, or more exactly did not return to camp at the usual hour. The other men, having gone hunting, had not seen him the whole day. Night fell and toward nine or ten o'clock in the evening, the most profound consternation reigned in the camp and particularly around the fire of the man who had disappeared, whose two wives and child held themselves embraced while mourning in advance the death of their husband and father. At this moment we decided to look around, accompanied by a few Indians. We had only to walk 200 meters to discover C20, crouched on the ground and shivering in the darkness. He was completely naked, that is, divested of his

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17



particular form of their own. Death is identified with these spirits. Men's souls are believed to be reincarnated as jaguars, whereas women's and children's souls are taken away by wind and thunder, never to return.

The highest being is the Thunder, with which any man, though usually a shaman, may have personal contact through revelations and visions. Women, however, except when very old, and children are deprived of these privileges. Women are also forbidden, under pain of death, to see the sacred flageolets (see Musical Instruments, p. 368) played at the ceremonies marking the beginning and the end of the dry season.

## SHAMANISM AND MEDICINE

The shaman is sometimes distinct from—but more frequently identified with—the political chief. He is distinguished by having the privilege of polygyny, playing the leading role in ceremonial life, and possessing special supernatural powers. He treats patients by sucking out the disease or by fighting it with small ritual arrows called "thunder-arrows."

In addition to magical cures, the *Nambicuara* treat sickness with numerous medicinal plants, which are used externally or internally according to the disease. For eye infection, which is very frequent, they apply the infusion of a special bark with the help of a container made of leaves.

## FOLKLORE, LORE, AND LEARNING

The only legend recorded by Lévi-Strauss (n.d. b) is a flood tale relating the destruction of human life and its re-creation through several incestuous marriages between the offspring of an old woman, who was the only being who escaped the disaster.

The only basic numbers used for counting are one and two, but the natives can reckon higher figures by combining these.

Colors are classified differently according to the dialects. The *Eastern, Central, Southern,* and *Western Nambicuara* agree in putting yellow and green in the same category, whereas the *Northern* group identify red and yellow, and class green, blue, and black together.

Some *Nambicuara* groups call stars by the same name which designates the spirits. The year is divided into two seasons and an undetermined number of lunar months. The day includes six main stages, each based on the position of the sun. Space is divided into two sections that are perpendicular to each other, one corresponding to the apparent movement of the sun and the other to the direction of the main waterways.

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756 by singing calls his *anánsu*, who eventually comes
754 up out of the ground in front of him. The *anánsu* may be in the form of a bird or a jaguar, but is very small in size. The shaman wears a hat made from a jaguar skin and a necklace made from jaguar claws and teeth. The shaman offers the hat and the necklace to his *anánsu* if he will do his bidding. If the *anánsu* is satisfied with the singing and the decorations he will carry out the shaman's orders. The procedure followed in curing
755 an individual who has been made ill by sorcery is much the same. The shaman calls his *anánsu* by singing and asks that he help him draw out the object. The *anánsu* enters the shaman, who then sucks out the dangerous object. In mild cases the shaman draws out bamboo slivers, but in cases of severe illness he draws out the bones of fish or the entrails of birds.

775 The ghosts of the dead (*aydnkadisu*) who live around the stone mountain from which the Nambicuara came, periodically come to the villages and camps asking for food. They are not dangerous if they are well-treated. When the shaman says that the *aydnkadisu* are around, the people prepare manioc cakes, roast ears of maize, and broil meat. They then gather around the shaman and sing together with the ghosts. The shaman thanks the ghosts for their singing and they finally go away. If the ghosts are dissatisfied with
[753] the offerings and the singing they become angry
[755] and make the children ill. To cure the children, a more elaborate feast has to be prepared for the ghosts.

775 In every case, contact with the ghosts of the
533 dead or with the spirits of dead shamans is made through singing. The Waklítisu do not use tobacco, drums, or rattles to communicate with the supernatural. One becomes a shaman when he hears the song of an *anánsu*, which he later uses whenever he wishes to contact his spirit helper. Everyone in the band appears to know the songs which bring the *aydnkadisu*. Shamans practice
[834] continence before important rites, for if the
756] *anánsu* observe sexual intercourse they become angry and take away all the cotton from the bushes.

●757 In addition to treating illness through shamanistic practices, the Nambicuara resort to more practical methods. They brew herbs, the juice of which is later poured over the head or stomach of a

757 patient. The juice of a certain plant is put into the cavities of teeth to stop toothache. The juice of boiled roots and leaves are taken internally for stomach disorders. One day I observed a woman pressing her foot over her husband's forehead as he lay on the ground. The heel was placed over the eye and she exerted considerable pressure. She was doing this to cure her husband's headache. These nonmagical practices are known to everyone. Some herbal medicines, however, are known only to the shamans and are used under the directions of the *anúnsu*.

778 534 The sacred flutes (*wdinrhu*) are associated with *ohlihditlisu*, the culture hero, agriculture, and chieftainship. As these flutes are similar in appearance to the sacred flutes of the Paressí, among whom they have great significance, it is possible that the Nambicuara obtained them originally from the Paressí. The flutes are about 2 feet long with four holes at the lower end and are made from a jointless piece of bamboo. When the band settles down near their manioc fields they build a special hut for the flutes, but when they are wandering around, the flutes are hidden in the [784] woods. Women are not permitted to see the flutes, and if one should accidently see them her stomach would swell and she would become ill. But what appears more important is the fact that the flutes poison people who do not treat them well. Yet, as only the chief and the head shamans play them this would mean that the flutes are the symbols of authority representing the men in whom power is invested. The flutes, four of which should be in every band, do not represent a spirit but appear to be more like fetishes. Boiled manioc juice is poured into them and they are offered maize and broiled meat.

241 775 533 The *wdinrhu* are played after the fields have been planted and again at harvest time. After planting, the men gather into the flute hut and play the flutes and sing the *wiyánsu*. The ghosts of the dead participate and, along with the flutes, are offered food and drink. At harvest time another ceremony called *haikánakídutsu* is performed at night during which the flutes are played and special songs are sung. The following day the whole band participates in a dance. The ghosts also take part in this ceremony.

534 In addition to the *wdinrhu* flutes, the Nambicuara have a smaller four-stop bamboo flute called

164 These papery scales cannot be removed easily; I noticed that they did not come off when the woman scratched herself. I believe that the itching is much less severe at this time; it seemed more intense during the initial stages.

I cannot be definite about the time span of the disease. The symptoms evolve in a few days from the first to the second stage, but the latter seems quite prolonged.

[183] Some of the scabs contain incipient papery scales. However, as I had the opportunity to see only one woman and one girl, her daughter, whose bodies were entirely covered with the lesions of the last stage, I believe that the disease does not always reach this point. It may remain stationary at the second stage, or it may recede [involuir].

For the time being, therefore, I ascribe three stages to the disease:

(a) the cyst stage
(b) the scab stage
(c) the scale stage

I believe that these correspond to evolutionary phases of the same disease, and not to different diseases, because I found transitional forms on some of the affected individuals.

Besides, [the Indians] indicated by means of very clear signs that the final symptoms began with the cyst stage, the only one found in nursing children.

[757] The Indians spread saliva on the scabs; we do not know yet [278] whether they use any herb against the disease. They probably do, for veritable herbariums were found in their villages.

302 751 Another question that remains to be solved is the possible effect on the disease of the Indians' custom of painting their body with a greasy paste made from the juice of the urucu seeds. (1)

[113]

1. Alvaro Osorio de Almeida (in the Boletim do Museu Nacional, Vol. 7, 1931, No. 1) studies the reactions of skin painted with urucu to the actinic rays of light and to solar heat. His experiments led him to the following conclusions:

"Once smeared with urucu, the

824 It is a curious fact that palm cabbage (palmito) is not utilized by the Serra do Norte Indians. Gabriel Soares [234] made it clear in 1587 that the aborigines of the coast prized the leaf buds of the palm tree: "Stupendous palm cabbages, five or six spans in length and as thick as a man's leg, are extracted from the buds of these palms."

273 Pineapple wine was a common beverage, for Soares goes on to say: "The nature of this fruit is hot and humid, and it is very harmful [278] to those with open wounds or sores; the same pineapples, when green [757] are good for curing sores, for their juice eats away all the rotten and putrid flesh, and the aborigines know this; in such wise does this fruit [279] *eat away, that they use its rind to wipe off the rust from their swords* and knives and to remove the stains from the clothes they wash; when ripe, the juice is used by the Indians to make a wine which inebriates them; to this end they pluck the fruit not quite ripe, on account of its being more sour..."

263 The Indians of the Serra do Norte found our salted food unpleasant. They often refused the plates we set before them, giving us to understand that it was the salty flavor which led them to behave in this manner.

262 Milk (condensed milk) was also rejected in the beginning; they would make a face and say that it was human milk and therefore repulsive: [235] "Anungçú!"

261 One must know the Indians' gluttony, their insatiable hunger, their continual, unfailing, artless, persistent animus devorandi, fully to comprehend the disgust which led them to such a renunciation.

262 The children are given to eat of everything; no matter what 855 goes into an Indian's mouth, there is always a crumb for the little one who walks beside him or rests in his arms.

276 Even the stimulants they use--tobacco, for instance--are shared 855 with the children. More than once I had the opportunity to observe Indians giving cigarettes to children under two. (1)

[113]

1. Cf. E. Roquette-Pinto, "A condição da criança entre os Indios do Brasil [The Status of the Child Among the Indians of Brazil," Primeiro Congresso Americano da Criança [First American Congress on Childhood] (Tucumán, 1916).

752 They spread saliva on bâanêcedûtú sores with the palm of the hand. They squeeze insect bites between two fingers.

757 Those suffering from fever go quietly into a corner, when they do not leap into running water. They eat nothing as long as the seizure lasts.

In the village on the Juina River there was an old Indian of about sixty. He was sad and prostrate and was not cheered by our gifts. He would put his hands to his head to show that it was aching. A lad who seemed [251] to be his son judging by the extreme affection he bestowed on the old man, contrary to the other Indians, kept offering him honey with water. Each time the old man would turn away. In the afternoon, his condition not having improved, he called the boy and said something to him.

The lad grasped the man's head in his hands and put his mouth against the nostrils, sucking hard. It seems that this suction which he repeated later was helpful, for the old man became more expansive.

[Fig. 41]

853 Childbirth must be easy, considering how poorly the foetus is nourished. The Indian women, when they do not have sufficient milk, take a drought of water in their mouth and put their lips onto those of the baby, transferring the liquid in a nourishing kiss.

844 I wanted to know how they cut the umbilical cord and showed several Indians who were more outgoing and intelligent--Damasceno, Nuleke, Krikriceknerá--a drawing in a book that showed a foetus with its attachments. From Damasceno's replies I understood that the mother cuts the cord with her teeth and hides the placenta under some leaves.

This piece of information obviously remains subject to revision.

531 Drawings by the Indians of the Serra do Norte, though rudimentary, reveal some interesting motifs emancipated from animal forms.

The circle, triangle and square are drawn in black on the surface of some gourds.

532 [252] Snakes and saurians are sometimes drawn sketchily(1)

113 1. See E. Roquette-Pinto, "Documentos para o estudo da psicologia dos Indios do